

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 2, and 4-9 have been amended, and claim 3 has been cancelled. A listing of the claims follows and replaces all prior listing of the claims.

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A lubricant composition for noise reduction of a speed reduction gear when filled into an engaged portion of a small gear and a large gear of the speed reduction gear, the lubricant composition consisting essentially of: characterized by comprising

a lubricating base oil;[[,]]

a thickener that is a calcium sulfonate-based thickener comprised of calcium sulfonate and that is mixed into the lubricating base oil to prevent oil separation; and

fine particles that are dispersed within the lubricating base oil and that are composed of any one kind of fine particles selected from the group consisting of:

(a) buffer particles made of a rubber or a soft resin, for use when one of the small gear and the large gear is made of a resin and another of the small gear and the large gear is made of a metal,

(b) particles having intermediate hardness made of a material which is softer than a gear tooth surface made of a metal and is harder than a gear tooth surface made of a resin, for use when one of the small gear and the large gear is made of the resin and another of the small gear and the large gear is made of the metal, and

(c) metal particles made of a metal which is softer than a gear tooth surface made of a metal, for use when both the small gear and the large gear are made of the metal.

Claim 2 (Currently amended): The lubricant composition according to claim 1, wherein the calcium sulfonate-based thickener is a complex of calcium sulfonate and at least one kind of calcium salt selected from the group consisting of among the following calcium salts: [[[i]]]

calcium carbonate, ~~[[(ii)]]~~ a higher fatty acid calcium salt, ~~[[(iii)]]~~ a lower fatty acid calcium salt, and ~~[[(iv)]]~~ calcium borate.

Claim 3 (Cancelled).

Claim 4 (Currently amended): The lubricant composition according to claim 1 ~~[[3]]~~, wherein the fine particles are buffer particles.

Claim 5 (Currently amended): The lubricant composition according to claim 4, wherein ~~the buffer particles have~~ an average particle diameter, D_1 , ~~of the buffer particles is~~ within a range of, $50\text{ }\mu\text{m} < D_1 \leq 300\text{ }\mu\text{m}$.

Claim 6 (Currently amended): The lubricant composition according to claim 4, wherein ~~a proportion of the buffer particles contained is~~ are present in an amount ranging from 20 to 300 parts by weight based on 100 parts by weight of a total amount of the lubricating base oil and the calcium sulfonate-based thickener.

Claim 7 (Currently amended): The lubricant composition according to claim 1, wherein ~~a kinematic viscosity of the lubricating base oil~~ has a kinematic viscosity ranging ~~[[is]]~~ from 5 to $200\text{ mm}^2/\text{s}$ (40°C), and ~~wherein the lubricant composition has~~ a mixing consistency (25°C) of ~~the lubricant composition is ranging~~ from 265 to 475.

Claim 8 (Withdrawn and currently amended): A speed reduction gear, ~~characterized by~~ comprising:

a small gear; and

a large gear ~~that engages the small gear and defines, wherein~~ a region including an engaged engaging portion of the both gears ~~that~~ is filled with the lubricant composition of claim 1.

Claim 9 (Withdrawn and currently amended): An electric power steering apparatus characterized in that an output of, comprising:

a steering mechanism;

a speed reduction gear according to claim 8; and

an electric motor for steering assist having an output that is transmitted to ~~[[a]] the~~ steering mechanism by reducing its speed through the speed reduction gear of ~~claim 8~~.